Navigating the new Arctic
Landscape Evolution and Adapting to Change in Ice-rich Permafrost Systems
Learning by Doing: Collaborative Practice with the Native Village of Point Lay and Regional Partners on an NNA Track 1 Project

Framework for Community Collaboration

Regional Advisory Group
Who: Leaders from the tribal and borough governments, school, village corporation, housing authority, regional Native nonprofit and UIC Science.
Role: To guide the overall direction of the project to ensure it meets local and regional needs and to evaluate its success in producing useful information. Meets annually.

Local Steering Committee
Who: Three to four members selected by the Tribal Council.
Role: To guide the project’s interactions with the community, including determining the best methods for engaging the community in the research and recruiting local assistants. Meets 3-4 times per year. Members receive a per-meeting stipend.

Village Liaison
Who: A community member selected by the Tribal Council.
Role: Main point of contact for project. The liaison helps coordinate the team’s communications with the community and provides logistical support for the team’s visits to Point Lay. Meets as needed. Annual stipend paid to the tribe.

Collaboration Agreement
In Year 1, we worked with the village liaison to write a project agreement to encourage a realistic and ethical framework for collaboration. It outlines roles and expectations for collaboration and data sharing, as well as compensation rates for local assistants. This seemed especially important in working with a community that had not previously adopted guidelines for researchers working on their land.

Research Assistance
Clockwise from top left: Tribal office staff Kimberly Ferreira and Maryann Neokok assist the project with planning and communications; Fire Chief Kilukluk Curtis identified new threats to health and safety from permafrost thaw in a June 2022 interview; Barbara Tukaloq and Genynly Stalker (along with Eugene Neokok, Jr., not pictured) joined our housing survey crew in April 2022; Steering Committee member Bill Tyskay Sr. instructs us on logistics; and provides invaluable data and insights.

Communication Tools

Data Products
High-resolution drone data and imagery yield research products with direct applications for community planning.

Sharing Back
Left: During a June 2022 research trip, we hosted a community barbecue and open house to share what we learned. Right: In Ugigvik, while on route to Point Lay, we consulted with the Inupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope (top) and officials from the North Slope Borough (bottom) Mayor’s Office Planning department, and (not pictured) Public Works, Capital Improvement Project Management, and UIC consulting engineers.

K-12 Partnership

Photo: Ben Jones and INIA Public

2-Minute Video (by Molly Mettig, Council): Goal: To introduce the project to the community and manage expectations about the project’s scope and limits.

Facebook Page
Goal: To provide a venue for project news and two-way communication with community members.

During COVID, we partnered with Kali School and teachers Joel Griffith (K-5 science) and Dianne Shreml (Grades 1-2) on permafrost-related lessons they could do with their classes. Left: Measuring snow depth and temperature. Right: Learning about good foundations for building houses on permafrost.

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